

Biennial Report
DIVISION OF STATE PARKS
David Morrow, Administrator

Purpose:

- The Division of State Parks acquires, protects, develops, and interprets a well-balanced system of areas with outstanding scenic, recreational, scientific, and historical importance for the inspiration, use, and enjoyment of Nevada's citizens and visitors in order that such areas shall be held in trust as irreplaceable portions of Nevada's natural and historical heritage.

Organizational Structure:

- The division is comprised of four sections: Administration, Accounting and Personnel, Park Operations and Maintenance, and Planning and Development. The Administration Section helps provide overall direction and leadership to the entire organization, sets goals, establishes policies, and assures the division meets its performance indicators. The Accounting and Personnel Section provide services to the field staff in accounting and personnel issues as well as monitoring budgets and contracts. The Operations and Maintenance Section provide the field services to manage and maintain 25 parks in four regions: Carson, Fallon, Panaca, and Las Vegas. The Planning and Development Section provide acquisition, planning, grants administration, design & engineering, construction management, and technical support services for the state park system. Staff also provided technical assistance to field personnel, administer grants to other government entities, and review activities that affect the state park system.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:	NRS 232.135, 384, and 407
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:	105 FTE and 138 Seasonal/2006
TELEPHONE:	775.684.2770
WEB SITE ADDRESS:	http://www.parks.nv.gov/

Goal:

- Continue to manage, protect, operate, and maintain existing and future units of the state park system.

Accomplishments:

- Completed Belmont Courthouse structural stabilization and seismic retrofit (4/06).
- Completed Buckland Station 1st floor restoration (11/06).
- Completed Mormon Station restroom and phase I day use improvements (9/05) and Campbell Property Day Use Expansion site improvements (6/07).
- Installed 5 SST restrooms at Lahontan (3/07), 3 more at Rye Patch (3/07), and 2 at South Fork Reservoir (4/07).

- Installed 37 shade ramadas in Washoe Lake Campground (6/07).
- Replaced dock at Lahontan SRA North Shore Marina (2/07); and Silver Springs RV dump station (6/07).
- Restored Sand Harbor – Sand Point Dunes (10/06).
- Initiated the construction of a 22 unit RV campground at Valley of Fire State Park. Each site is designed to accommodate large RV units with water and power hookups.
- Initiated the construction of a 24 unit RV campground with water, power and sewer hookups at Big Bend of the Colorado State Recreation Area and significant renovation and improvement of the day use area.
- Completed Phase I of the Dangberg Ranch preservation plan, which included re-roofing of five historic buildings.
- Completed construction of a new visitor center at Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park - Sand Harbor, with associated public restrooms and multi-use elevated outdoor decks. Interpretive exhibits and a park store/ gourmet food concession within the building were completed and dedicated in 2007.
- Completed 78 deferred maintenance projects at a total cost of \$1,407,879. The projects included upgrades to the historic Spring Mountain Ranch House, replacement of the stockade posts at Mormon Station, new exterior siding on the restrooms at Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, Sand Harbor, several new vault toilets at Lahontan, beach stabilization at Big Bend, roofs at Valley of Fire and bank stabilization at Echo Reservoir.
- Initiated planning at Dayton, Spring Mountain and South Fork State Parks.

Goal:

Carefully evaluate the current state park system recommend the addition or deletion of parks and or property with the goal of maintaining a well-balanced and sustainable system of parks, recreation areas or historical sites.

Accomplishments:

- Initiated 371 acre land exchange with a private property owner adjacent to Spring Valley State Park.
- Completed the planning process for Van Sickle Bi-State Park, and made substantial progress in developing an operating agreement with the California-Tahoe Conservancy for future operation and management of a bi-state park
- Completed the transfer of Floyd Lamb State Park to the City of Las Vegas.
- Evaluated proposals to add new parks or adjacent property to the state park system. The evaluations have included the development of acquisition and operating costs as well as benefits to current park operation.
- Continue to pursue federal approval for the sale of the 80 acre Pine Creek parcel of land to the Bureau of Land Management.

- Received approximately 2,900 acres of U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service land adjacent to Cave Lake State Park to the State of Nevada, Division of State Parks.
- Received approximately 650 acres of Bureau of Land Management property adjacent to Ward Charcoal State Park to State of Nevada, Division of Sate Parks

Goal:

- Continue to manage and interpret the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the state park system.

Accomplishments:

- Requested \$150,000 legislative appropriation for fuels reduction projects at Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park that will be used as a match for two (2) NDF grants totaling \$250,000. Fuels reduction work is projected to begin in 2008.
- Continued to work with the Nevada Tahoe Resource Team to improve management practices in the backcountry of Nevada State Park, Lake Tahoe, regarding additional recreational trail opportunities, improvement of forest health, and protection of endangered species.
- Lobbied the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD) to include the Leave No Trace programs as an associate member. Sponsored and taught the first ever Leave No Trace Master Course in Nevada. Scheduled future Leave No Trance and Tread Lightly Courses.
- Conducted 2,000 interpretive programs and special events that were attended by approximately 60,000 people. Some of the special activities included: joint effort with State Parks, Lincoln County, and Bureau of Land Management in celebrating National Trails and Public Lands Day in some of the parks, Dutch Oven Cook-off at Cathedral Gorge, annual Atlatl Competition at Valley of Fire, Cowboy Christmas at Washoe Lake, and continued participation in the Nevada Day Parade. The State Park entry won the Community Awards and the Parade Judges award.
- Proposed and received approval to establish a statewide invasive weed control program that includes the use of goat herds, herbicides and replanting of native seeds to control the spread of invasive weeds.
- Initiated the inventory and cataloging of artifacts at three historic sites. Completed cataloging and properly storing approximately 18,000 artifacts at Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park.

Goal:

- Maintain a high level of customer service and adopt management practices that recognize individual park differences and assign decision-making authority appropriately. Continue to assess and improve the state park law enforcement public safety program to provide a safe visitor experience.

Accomplishments:

- Increased the number and quality of NSPCA sales outlets in an effort to better serve park visitors and increase funding for interpretive programs and training.
- Co-sponsored the National Trails Administrator's Conference with the California Department of State Parks.
- Continued to enhance the safety of commissioned park rangers by replacing safety equipment and increasing the availability of more advanced equipment. Requested and received approval for replacement body armor, testing for blood borne pathogens and CPR training.
- Completed through a contract with the Nevada Conservation Corp a yearlong, statewide survey of Nevada State Park users. This data will be utilized, in part, to update the 2003 Stateside Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), as well as provide guidance to Nevada State Parks in developing facilities and providing services and programs.
- \$1,274,000 in Recreational Trails Program grants were awarded to 14 statewide projects
- \$271,000 in Land & Water Conservation Fund grants were awarded to 4 statewide projects
- Continued to collect input from park visitors and respond to their comments, concerns and suggestions.
- Carefully evaluated park incident reports and followed up with suggestions for improving park or public safety.

Goal:

- Prioritize revenue generation and marketing in an effort to offset the cost of operating parks and programs.

Accomplishments:

- Worked closely with the Commission on Tourism and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to enhance the marketing of state parks through improved brochure content and distribution, adding state parks to the tourism web-site and advertising state parks in various publications.
- Renegotiated current concession contracts to standardize contract terms and increase revenue.
- Reduced fees at a few park locations in an attempt to increase visitation. Added annual permit passes at two park locations to address visitors requests.
- Revised the wedding permits process at Valley of Fire State Park to comply with the commercial user permit policy and streamline the permit process.
- Continued to expand a very successful special event at Cave Lake State Park, "Fire and Ice". The event was recognized by the American Busman's Association as, "One of the Nation's Top 100 Events". In 2007 the event attracted 2,080 visitors and contestants.

Goal:

- Develop a recruitment and retention program to attempt to address a decline in applicants for park ranger, maintenance, and interpretive positions.

Accomplishments:

- Increased advertisement of vacant positions by adding several job recruitments sites: The National Association of State Park Directors, Western State Park Organizations, The National Recreation and Parks Association and local newspapers.
- Attended the University of Nevada Job Fair.
- Contacted colleges and universities that specialize in natural resource management, wildlife or recreation management programs and requested their assistance in posting and advertising vacancies.
- The number of job applicants has increased, in part, due to increased efforts to broaden the means of advertising vacancies, attending job fairs and more effectively recruiting seasonal employees, but also because of a tightening job market.
- Constructed two seasonal employee cabins at Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park. Because of the parks remote location it is not possible to attract seasonal employees without housing.

Key Long Term Goals:

- Continue to try and increase the division's operating budget in attempt to address significant budget shortages caused by the increase cost of fuel, supplies and utilities.
- Analyze any potential park acquisitions to ensure there is a clear benefit to the state or local community, and that appropriate measures are taken to reduce or eliminate the impact to the state general fund.
- Continue to explore additional revenue generating sources including the utilization of: enterprise accounts, agency operated sales outlets, property sale or lease; grants, partnerships, automated fee collection systems, increased staffing at entrance stations, cabin rentals and more special events and activities.
- Periodically revise park user fees, special use and other fees, and evaluate other potential funding sources. Evaluate the cost of subsidized use of state parks by senior citizens.
- Improve resource management throughout the state park system. Plans exist to upgrade the basic inventory of natural resources, identify major natural resource issues, and reduce or eliminate noxious weeds.
- Work towards partnerships with the Divisions of Forestry and State Lands to create an environmental improvement program similar to the one that was established at Lake Tahoe.

- Continue to work towards establishing sustainable development criteria in all state parks and add sustainable development levels to the updating of park master plans.
- Develop a cultural resource management program to better care for historic sites and cultural artifacts. Establish guidelines for cataloging collections, standards for proper storage, and guidelines for all historic stabilization and improvement projects.
- Develop interpretive plans for each state park and increase integration of interpretive services within its normal operations and management. Continue to expand efforts to hire interpretive professionals and to provide more education and training to all division personnel.
- Develop state park specific programs that correlate with the national “Last Kid in the Woods program.”

Significant Legislative or Executive Actions Affecting the Agency:

- Revisions were made to the State Parks Nevada Administrative Code, which raised the state parks fee schedule and clarified language.
- SB 226 - Created a revolving account for paying expenses involved in thinning the forests in state parks
- SB 287 - Commissioned State Park Rangers were included in the Police/Fire retirement system.
- Commissioned State Park Rangers and Park Supervisors received a 10% pay adjustment.
- AB 469 – Extend money to State Parks to do a feasibility study to develop a state park in Upper Las Vegas Wash.
- AJR 9 – Certain proceeds from Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 to be used for the improvement and preservation of Nevada’s state parks

Publications

- Completed Master Plan for Mormon Station State Historic Park.